

Who Can I Trust?

- by Joyce Meyer

The subject of trust—or rather lack of trust—fills the headlines these days. How do we tell the good guys from the bad guys? How do we know who is trustworthy and who is not? There are no easy answers, and sometimes the people we believed we could trust most let us down.

For example, I knew by the age of seven that I couldn't trust my parents because they were self-absorbed and very abusive. As I grew into a teenager and young adult, I had other sad experiences that screamed the message, "You can't trust anybody!" I got married at the age of eighteen to a young man who was unfaithful in addition to being a petty thief who ended up in prison. I'm sure that I also met people who could be trusted, but I was so angry with the people who had hurt and disappointed me that I tended to focus on that.

I married Dave at the age of twenty-three, and from that point on I regularly attended church. I assumed that because I was now involved with "church people," I could trust them and would not get hurt, but that didn't turn out to be correct either. As a matter of fact, some of the deepest disappointments I have experienced in my life have come from Christians. You may have experienced the same thing, and I'm sure you have some harrowing stories to tell about what people have done to you.

But the truth is human beings, including ourselves, are flawed, and we are setting ourselves up for painful disappointment if we think otherwise. Jesus came for the weak, not the strong, and I am grateful that He did. I need mercy and forgiveness regularly, and that means I also need to be ready to give them generously.

So what should we do when people disappoint us? I believe we can trust people without placing a trust in them that, in reality, belongs only to God. Jesus talked about this and the apostle John recorded it:

But Jesus [for His part] did not trust Himself to them, because He knew all [men]. John 2:24

This Scripture does not say that Jesus didn't trust anyone. Instead it says that He did not trust Himself to them. What does that mean? He didn't give Himself over to the idea that men would never disappoint Him. He didn't put Himself entirely in their hands for safekeeping.

And He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man [needed no evidence from anyone about men], for He Himself knew what was in human nature... John 2:25

Jesus knows all of our weaknesses. But He came to strengthen us in our weakness and forgive our failures and sins. If we want peace in our lives, we need to do the same thing.

There is not one of us who can say that we have not hurt and disappointed others, or that we have not been hurt and disappointed. I never purposely mean to hurt anyone, but yet I do. Part of being in relationship requires a willingness to be disappointed and yet find a way to continue building trust, rather than giving up.

So I have decided that I don't expect anyone (except God) to never disappoint me. And even with God, I am sometimes initially disappointed when things don't turn out the way I had hoped they would. But there is a difference between my being disappointed and God disappointing me. My own expectations are the source of my disappointment, not God, because Scripture teaches that if we put our hope in Him, He never disappoints us (see Romans 5:5).

I find that when I don't trust God, I am filled with doubt, fear, worry, and anxiety. It is stressful and places a heavy burden on me that I don't want to carry. But when I trust Him, believing His Word and promises, I have peace and joy and I enjoy life.

If you are having trouble trusting in God, I want to encourage you to pray this simple prayer: "Father, help me learn to trust You." God is willing to meet you where you are and help you get to where you need to be. That is the good news of the Gospel!

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